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Ringba, Pay-Per-Call Giant, Faces Wire Fraud Allegations and FBI Probe

FONDALIZA SOHPHOH January 18, 2025

The line between predatory behavior and lawlessness is thin, and sensitive data is called sensitive for a reason. These are important truisms for the pay-per-call performance marketing companies to remember — especially since Adam Young's giant, Ringba, is now facing a wave of allegations, legal battles, and an FBI investigation amid the concern of the company's malicious business practices.

The Story of TCPA Litigator List's Stolen Data

Known for its call tracking platform and TCPA tools, Ringba has been a significant player in the industry, boasting $7.5 mln in annual revenue. However, recent lawsuits and allegations, including claims of stolen TCPA data *(TCPA Litigator List vs. Ringba LLC*), have cast a shadow over its operations.

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It all started in 2020, when Adam Young approached Michael O'Hare, the founder of TCPA Litigator List, with an expressed interest in buying his company. Unbeknownst to O'Hare, Ringba wasn't a buyer, but a fraudulent competitor. In parallel to the negotiations, Adam Young created a fake account on the TCPA Litigator List website and got access to its databases. Within days, Ringba was selling the same TCPA suppression list. After finally hearing the ridiculous price of $70k for the company, O'Hare went to court.

Although the case was ultimately dismissed on a technicality — specifically a discovery sanction after the plaintiff allegedly withheld evidence — a court-ordered comparison of the databases showed a stunning 97% overlap. The defense demanded that the plaintiff turn over his complete source code during discovery, knowing that such a request would be nearly impossible to fulfill. This strategy aimed to exploit the discovery process to force a dismissal on technical grounds and set up a potential Rule 37 violation to shift fees. Though Ringba avoided a loss through technicality, the case brought its business practices into question. If Ringba went to trial, it was highly likely they would lose.

FBI Probe Catches Ringba in the Crosshairs

Ringba's story, however, doesn't end with breach of contract, negotiations deception, and predatory litigation tactics. Imagine an anti-TCPA defense database combined with getting a caller profile in the blink of an eye. Ringba sounds like a coveted prize for any scammer, doesn't it? You know exactly who you

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target with the pop-up ads – their age group, income level, location, and even their level of digital literacy. You simply get a rerouted call, pick up the phone, and convince the victim to transfer money. Icing on the cake — you will be visible to no major telecom provider.

It doesn't come as a surprise that Ringba indeed became an outpost for scammers. What does, though, is that Ringba didn't simply tolerate fraudulent activity on its platform — on the contrary, Adam Young and his team willingly marketed Ringba to the tech support fraudsters. These aren't some bold accusations — this is an official US Attorney indictment for conspiracy, enabling wire fraud, and tech support scam (see USA v. Sean Hitchcock).

Citing the case, Ringba helped fraudsters avoid detection by *"rotat[ing] telephone numbers frequently," "us[ing] a large pool of telephone numbers,"* telling telephone carriers that *"a particular telephone number had been removed"* even though Ringba permitted the *"fraudsters to continue committing fraud on [Ringba's] platform by using other telephone numbers."*

In other words, Ringba actively marketed itself to scammers, onboarded them on the platform while providing additional security against the law, and helped to ward off carriers' concerns. Truly outstanding customer service and impeccable business practices — sadly, for the most malign audience possible.

Predatory Litigation — Now Against the State

Yet, Ringba continues to rely on aces up its sleeve. It seems that Adam Young, like a skilled magician, has himself long forgotten where the line between mastery and deceit lies. Immediately after finding out that one of their salesmen, Sean Hitchcock, was cooperating as a witness with the FBI and DOJ, Ringba filed a civil proceedings case. They claimed that Hitchcock's behavior constituted a breach of contract and that Hitchcock revealed proprietary information during collaboration with government agencies.

Among other things, the company has issued broad document requests seeking *"All documents and communications exchanged between You and any other person… regarding Ringba or its customers,… Adam Young, Harrison Gevirtz, or any other matter related to Ringba from January 2021 to present."*

Ringba's strategy is clear — by doing so, the company attempts to thwart the criminal investigation, find out the details of the ongoing investigation, and construct a counter-testimony to present during the court hearing. Is it ethical for a prominent industry player to do so? Hardly. Is this practice approved by the US courts? Not at all. According to Dominguez v. Hartford Financial Services, a criminal investigation target can't "use the civil discovery process to ferret out the particulars of the prosecuting authorities' case against them."

And — just in case you were thinking Ringba v. Hitchcock is a forced exception — Ringba is simultaneously using the same tactic against its ex-CTO, who is also in cooperation with the FBI. Like with

Hitchcock, Ringba asserts the misappropriation of trade secrets and confidential information. This case is by no means an exception for Ringba — this is simply how Adam Young and Harrison Gevirtz run their business.

Deep Shadows on the Success Story

It seems that Ringba's role as a major player in call tracking and TCPA compliance is gradually coming to an end. From the breach of contract and unfair competition in the TCPA Litigator List case to direct FBI accusations of wire fraud and scam assistance, the company's future is overshadowed by its malicious practices coming to light. Yes, Ringba continues to resist and rely upon its predatory litigation tactics, but the DOJ is unlikely to tolerate what worked with the TCPA Litigator List. The industry is waiting for the criminal case hearing.

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